with provisions of statutes governing the financial institutions as also the provisions of the Public financial Institutions (Obligations as to Fidelity and Secrecy) Act, 1983, the information relating to details of individual debtors getting exemption/concession are not divulged by banks.

Rise in food prices and inflation

2402. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether expressing concern over rising food prices, his Ministry is considering, to take several measures to check the same;

(b) if so, whether inflation is still is threat for rising food prices in India;

(c) if so, what are the other reasons pointed out by him; and

(d) the steps Government proposes to take to reduce the prices of essential commodities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (d) The inflation measured in terms of Wholesale Price Index (WPI) for all commodities, composite food and for 30 essential commodities are indicated in Table 1.

Table 1 : WPI based annual rate of inflation (%)

Month-Year	All Commodities	Composite food	30 Essential Commodities
Weight(%)->	100.00	26.94	21.63
Apr-07	6.3	8.2	3.3
May-07	5.5	6.5	1.7
Jun-07	4.5	4.1	0.9
Jul-07	4.7	7.2	2.8
Aug-07	4.1	6.3	2.7
Sep-07	3.5	4.2	1.2
Oct-07	3.1	3.2	0.6
Nov-07	3.3	2.5	0.7
Dec-07	3.8	2.7	1.3
Jan-08	4.5	3.7	2.7
Feb-08(P)	4.6	4.4	2.9
Mar-08(P)	6.4	6.6	5.2

P: Provisional

The rate of inflation for all commodities inclusive of Composite food and Essential commodities shows an increase in March 2008 (provisional). Increase in the rate of inflation

in March, 2008 has been due to an increase in prices of vegetables, cotton, oil seeds, iron ore, edible oils and steel related products.

Containment of inflation remains high on the agenda of the Government. anti-inflationary policies of the Government include strict fiscal discipline, rationalization of duties of essential items, effective supply-demand management of essential commodities through liberal tariff and trade policies and procurement by public agencies. The Monetary policy of Reserve Bank of India, while being conducive to economic growth, has attempted to contain inflationary expectations arising out of uncertainties in domestic and international environment.

Help for rupee-hit exporter

2403. SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Centre has asked the State Governments to help rupee-hit exporters by refunding their taxes as it has already given three packages to the sector involving around Rs. 5,200 crore;

(b) if so, whether at present, the number of taxes, including VAT, octroi, electricity duty, etc. are borne by exporters;

(c) whether he has stated that any State which relieves exporters of tax burden tends to gain as more export oriented industry would locate there;

(d) if so, what is the reaction of the State Government; and

(e) how many States have, so far, refunded the export taxes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S. S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) to (e) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Input subsidy for farmers

2404. SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has been urged by the Andhra Pradesh Government that the Central Government should give input subsidy to farmers instead of sanctioning loan waivers;

(b) if so, whether, according to the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, loan waivers benefits only 50 per cent of the small and marginal farmers and loan waivers only benefited those who are not regular in their repayments and frequent waivers could, in turn, become an incentive to farmers not to pay back their loans; and

(c) if so, to what extent Government is considering to give input subsidy to farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (c) The Government of Andhra Pradesh had suggested the Central Government for extending a one time grant of Rs. 15,000/- for all small and marginal farmers in the country, to be disbursed at the rate of Rs. 5,000/- per annum beginning with financial year 2008-09.

Providing debt waiver/debt relief to defaulting farmers should not be viewed as a disincentive to the farmers who have been prompt in repaying their debts. It must be realized